

Post-Event Summary Report May 6, 2005

Name of Event: White House Conference on Aging Event

Date of Event: April 8, 2005

Location of Event: Friendship Retirement Community Resident's Center
Roanoke, VA

Number of Persons Attending: 48

Sponsoring Organization: League of Older Americans, Inc. d/b/a LOA
Area Agency on Aging

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Priority Issue # 1: Several speakers addressed concerns with Medicare Part D; that it is too complicated for average citizens to understand.

Barriers: Taking many medicines, even with Medicare Part D, will not be able to afford.

Proposed Solution: Congress should negotiate with the drug companies for better prices for Medicare Part D. Congressman Bob Goodlatte (R), Va's 6th District, Event Convener, agreed.

Priority Issue # 2: Concerns about Social Security were brought up a number of times.

Barriers: Worry that private accounts will hurt recipients.

Solutions: Social Security is an insurance program, not an investment program. Everyone needs all legs of three-legged stool: retirement/pension; Social Security; savings/investments. People need to save more.

Priority # 3: Many nursing home residents have Alzheimer's Disease.

Barrier: Some people diagnosed with Alzheimer's have a physical problem rather than Alzheimer's and that can be treated.

Solution: Develop a test that can accurately diagnose Alzheimer's vs other diseases/problems. More money needs to be spent on Alzheimer's research.

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Priority # 4: Seniors are being over-medicated.

Barriers: Seniors see several doctors and use multiple pharmacies, so drug interaction is a problem. Drug ads and samples are for latest and most expensive drugs.

Solutions: Always keep a list of both prescription and over-the counter drugs with you. Keep dosages as well. A medications data bank would be useful so that both doctors and pharmacists can review. (This would also help with Medicare Part D, for billing purposes and would be a reminder that some older drugs are cheaper and are as effective as newer more expensive drugs).

Priority #5: Long Term Care Insurance is costly but may be helpful.

Barriers: Long Term Care Insurance is expensive, but when needed, would eliminate the necessity of selling assets to pay for care. A caregiver had to sell assets for nursing home care for husband with Alzheimer's.

Solution: Buy Long Term Care Insurance when you are young when premiums are lower. The caregiver above has now bought it for herself, but had to pay more because of her age. Also, Long Term Care Policies need to have the same kind of rating that Medi-gap policies, so one can compare apples and apples.